

Message

**From:** EPAResearchCompass [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=C1E8F11508674C3C954553A1129D33E5-EPARESEARCH]  
**Sent:** 12/4/2018 6:49:53 PM  
**To:** ORD-ALL Feds and NonFeds and RSLs [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=2c735272eef941588aefd9a05ed28823-ORD-ALL Feds and NonFeds and RSLs]  
**CC:** Lincoln, Larry [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=8248d03a1441414db7754db201ebec45-Lincoln, Larry]; Barnett, Felicia [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=5773b45cae5142fe950861dd6146f1e9-Barnett, Felicia]; Carter, Bobbi [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=f16dcafe85fc418ebd1651be2e8ab82d-Carter, Bobbi]; Gettle, Jeaneanne [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=d8e72aa7e1894faea44006fd9f22b637-Gettle, Jeaneanne]; Taylor, Dawn [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=b984d00ec06544e498ee5d986f97047c-Taylor, Dawn]; Klinger, Adam [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=346d5466632f4967adc7169c8d2ce4fd-Klinger, Adam]; Liljegren, Jennifer [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=c7098a838cd34f75b8878571fe95d939-JLiljegr]; Pollard, Solomon [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=16cdf700f8024145847a2770b84abae3-Pollard, Solomon]; Clarage, Meredith [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=ee9504437be545489f518710a5e80e68-Clarage, Meredith]; Fan, Shirley [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=cdeba1df9599435cb7401d0a65be7cda-Sfan02]; Peffers, Mel [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=1b6116fbb41448b38b3caefc882165fe-Peffers, Melissa]; Crk, Tanja [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=fccf9b9519484e8f88e90d3573253817-Tanja Crk]  
**Subject:** Weekly Compass: December 4, 2018



Weekly Update: 12/4/2018

Welcome to the Weekly Compass, your gateway to information about recent and upcoming ORD activities. If you have ideas for the Weekly Compass, please send them to the [editors](#). To see past issues, visit [the archive](#) on ORD@work.

## Weekly Note from Jennifer

ORDers- As you know, President Trump declared Wednesday, December 5 a national day of mourning to honor President George H.W. Bush and signed an executive order to close the federal government, excusing all federal employees from duty except those who, in the judgment of the head of the agency, cannot be excused for reasons of national security, defense, or other essential public business. Holiday rules will be in effect for all employees, including those who have a compressed day on that day. Any employees scheduled to be on travel on Wednesday, should consult their supervisor.

On Friday, David Dunlap and I will be meeting with acting Administrator Wheeler about our restructuring efforts and the draft Particulate Matter Integrated Science Assessment.

This week's [Combined Federal Campaign](#) (CFC) cause is global health. So far ORD staff have contributed over \$60,000 to a wide variety of CFC causes. The campaign goes until January 11, 2019. Thanks to everyone who has contributed so far.

With FY19 underway, I want to remind staff of the requirement to report technical assistance outside of the StRAPs, ORD's technical support centers, and regional research programs (e.g., RARE, RESES) in [TechTracker](#). This requirement ensures a comprehensive accounting of this valued support. Please watch for invites for training sessions to be held over the next couple of weeks for new staff and existing staff on TechTracker use. I am proud of the many hours of technical support that we provide, and I deeply appreciate your commitment to ORD's mission and this effort to ensure that our work is recognized throughout EPA. -Jennifer

## Quick Updates

- Non-confidential, Congressional Research Service (CRS) reports are now public at <https://crsreports.congress.gov/>.
- Now - December 10: Federal Benefits Open Season (Health, Dental/Vision, Flexible Spending) is open. The [Virtual Benefits Fair](#) is open during open season.
- December 11: The [2019 16th Annual P3 Awards: A National Student Design Competition Focusing on People, Prosperity and the Planet Phase 1 Request for Applications \(RFA\)](#) closes
- December 14: Response to "Request for Final 2018 Conference Spending Data" due to OCFO
- December 31: Mandatory manager/supervisor training must be completed
- January 7: Nominate your colleagues for the [Arthur S. Flemming Awards](#)! Email one to two paragraphs justifying the award nomination to [Marian P. Cooper](#) in the Office of Administration and Resource Management by Monday, Jan. 7

- January 18: Nominate [a colleague for a Service to America Medal aka the Sammies!](#) Anyone can nominate a federal employee for a Sammie, so consider nominating an EPA colleague by January 18.
- Don't forget to [check out the open opportunities on Talent Hub!](#)
- You can read the [This Week @ EPA newsletter here.](#)
- Upcoming webinars:
  - [New Insights in Atmospheric Science | Origin and Fate of Polyfluorinated Chemicals in the Environment: Monday, December 10, 2-3 ET](#)
  - [Homeland Security Research Webinar: Decontamination of Legionella in Home Plumbing Systems and Drinking Water Infrastructure Decontamination at EPA's Water Security Test Bed: Tuesday, December 11, 1-2 ET](#)
  - [EPA Tools and Resources Webinar: Technical Support Centers: Monday, December 17, 3-4 ET](#)
  - [Computational Toxicology Communities of Practice: ToxValDB: A comprehensive database of quantitative in vivo study results from over 25,000 chemicals: Thursday, December 20, 11-12 ET](#)

## Faces of ORD: NERL's Asja Korajkic

### In the Lab:

#### NHSRC Provides Technical Support on a Hospital Autoclave

NHSRC received a request from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) to provide technical advice to New York State Department of Health (NYDOH) regarding issues with an autoclave. The request was to help troubleshoot autoclave fouling problems seriously impacting surgical services at one of the medical facilities, specifically inhibiting their ability to sterilize surgical equipment. As a result, this facility was forced to cancel all elective surgeries. NHSRC staff provided information on potential boiler and/or autoclave issues that might have led to the fouling as well as some published information on other similar facilities that have corrected such problems.

#### SBIR Phase I Kick-off Meeting

Acting Administrator Wheeler provided welcoming remarks at NCER's SBIR Phase I meeting last week. This meeting kicked off the recently awarded small business contracts funded under the SBIR Phase I solicitation for 2017-2018. Seventeen contracts were awarded to 16 small businesses across the country to develop new technologies that protect the environment while growing the economy. Funded companies provided a brief overview of their proposed technology, met with the SBIR Program Lead, learned about commercialization options, and networked with other companies.

#### Follow-up on Aerial Sampling of Boiler Stack, Midland, MI

Last month, NRMRL's Brian Gullett and Bill Mitchell conducted aerial sampling downwind of a boiler stack at a Dow Chemical plant as part of a Cooperative Research and Development Agreement with Dow. The company operated a drone equipped with NRMRL's Kolibri sampling unit. Brian and Bill were able to access the invisible plume from the industrial boiler, sometimes sampling carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) above 10,000 parts per million. The team also saw nitric oxide and nitrogen dioxide (during CO<sub>2</sub> peaks) in the plume. About eight sampling flights of 15 minutes each were performed during this test. This effort will continue as Dow aims to more safely and effectively complete stack testing requirements.

## **CalEPA and TCEQ Training**

Last week, at the request of the State of California EPA (CalEPA) and Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), NCEA's Jeff Gift and Allen Davis provided a joint Benchmark Dose Methods Software (BMDS) training to CalEPA and TCEQ risk assessors. This is part of a compendium of state-focused training programs NCEA is developing.

## **Tribal Science Council**

This week, EPA's Gulf Breeze Laboratory is hosting the National EPA-Tribal Science Council (TSC) meeting. Gulf Breeze scientists will provide lab tours, demonstrate new technologies, and present on research activities of interest to tribes. The meeting will feature a training on Indigenous Research Framework and Methodologies and an interactive "Speed-Learning" session for information exchange between tribal and ORD scientists. Lisa Matthews will present ORD's recent efforts, in collaboration with the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) and the Environmental Council of the States (ECOS), on communicating the risk of PFAS and HABs. This presentation will highlight lessons learned, including two case studies in North Carolina and New York as well as the ongoing risk communication models effort, which expands on last year's project.

## **Discussing PFAS Preliminary Findings with New Jersey DEP**

Today and tomorrow, NERL's Tim Buckley, Mark Strynar, John Washington, Andy Lindstrom, Kate Sullivan and Elaine Hubal will be in Trenton, NJ to meet with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP). ORD will share data reports and discuss preliminary findings with NJDEP project partners on the detection and distribution of PFAS compounds in water bodies, soil and vegetation in an industrialized area where PFAS are manufactured. Additional ORD presentations will include an overview of non-targeted analysis methods and a summary briefing to NJDEP management and staff. The trip will also include a visit to a chemical manufacturing facility.

## **A Look at Building Material Life Cycle Assessments**

On November 14, *The International Journal of Life Cycle Assessment* published "[Integrating exposure to chemicals in building materials during use stage](#)" co-authored by NRMRL's Nicholas Anastas, Daniel Vallero, and Jane Bare and NERL's Peter Egeghy. The article explores ways to characterize the exposure of the occupants of buildings to the chemicals used in building materials. It summarizes the current status of building material life cycle assessments and recommends a systematic approach for their future

development, emphasizing the health impacts on building occupants. The authors illustrate their proposed approach with a case study and identify needed developments to make the approach fully operational.

## **Presenting Pb Mapping Efforts at Cross-Agency Meeting**

Today, NERL's Valerie Zartarian and Region 5's Alan Walts will present at a cross-Agency meeting on EPA lead (Pb) mapping efforts for identifying high Pb exposure communities. Zartarian and Walts will present on the ORD and Region 5 pilot effort that uses available indices, models, blood lead and environmental data for Ohio. The presentation will include draft analyses from Zartarian and NERL's Mike Tornero, Jim Xue and Jay Garland in collaboration with Region 5 and Office of Environmental Justice. This technical assistance by ORD is related to EPA's Environmental Justice and Community Revitalization Council's (EJCRC's) rapid request for Regions to identify Pb focus communities.

## **NERL Scientist Invited to Improve Air Quality Modeling in Vietnam**

NERL's David Wong was invited to visit Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology in Vietnam this week. Wong will establish a collaborative relationship with university researchers to apply EPA models, data and tools to quantify air pollutants in one of the most heavily industrialized and polluted regions of the globe. Wong will introduce an advanced version of EPA's Community Multiscale Air Quality (CMAQ) model that is designed to better simulate interactions between weather, clouds and air pollutants. The collaboration with Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology should improve the robustness of this version of CMAQ, and it could ultimately lead to reducing the air pollutants transported across the Pacific into the United States.

## **USGCRP Reports Issued**

The second volume of the Fourth National Climate Assessment (NCA4) was released on November 23 (the first volume, the "Climate Science Special Report," was released in November 2017). NCA4 Volume II covers the impacts of climate change in the U.S. in fifteen chapters that address specific sectors and topics at a national scale and ten chapters that address regional impacts. Two chapters cover responses through adaptation and mitigation. Seventeen EPA staff including several from ORD, contributed to the development of the Assessment.

The second State of the Carbon Cycle Report (SOCCR2) was also released on Friday. This is an interagency assessment of the state of the carbon cycle across North America (i.e., U.S., Canada, and Mexico). SOCCR2 emphasizes advances in the understanding of carbon cycle science and associated human dimensions of the carbon cycle across land, air, and water since 2007. The report assesses key carbon stocks and fluxes, their social drivers, and management practices and tools.

## **Modeling Free Chlorine**

NRMRL's Dave Wahman and Matt Alexander (OW) are co-authors on a paper, "A Drinking Water Relevant Water Chemistry Model for the Free Chlorine and Cyanuric Acid System from 5°C to 35°C," published in *Environmental Engineering Science*. The

purpose of this research is to be able to estimate free chlorine concentrations using an established water chemistry model at temperatures other than 25°C. This research was initiated at the request of OW.

## **Fellow Publication**

An alumnus of the EPA STAR Fellowship Program (2010), Colleen Reid, published a "[Critical Review of Health Impacts of Wildfire Smoke Exposure](#)" in *Environmental Health Perspectives*. The paper explored the health impacts associated with wildfire smoke. The paper found that wildfire smoke exposure is associated with respiratory morbidity, which is consistent with growing evidence supporting an association with all-cause mortality. Since completing her STAR Fellowship in 2013, Dr. Reid continued to study the impacts of wildfire smoke on sensitive populations and is currently an assistant professor of geography with the University of Colorado Boulder.

## **Grantee Publication on Phthalates and Gene Expression**

Phthalates are a group of chemicals used to make plastics more flexible and are used in hundreds of products, such as vinyl flooring, detergents, and personal-care products such as soaps, shampoos, and makeup. Two EPA/NIEHS Children's Centers ([University of California-Berkeley](#) and [Duke University](#)) collaborated on a recent publication in the journal *Epigenomics* entitled "[DNA Methylation of Imprinted Genes in Mexican-American Newborn Children with Prenatal Phthalate Exposure](#)." Recent limited evidence suggests that prenatal exposure to phthalates can affect epigenetic dysregulation in newborns. Fetal exposure to phthalates was estimated by measuring phthalate metabolite concentrations in the mother's urine during pregnancy for women in a Mexican-American cohort. Umbilical cord blood DNA samples were then used to determine the methylation (an epigenetic mechanism used by cells to control gene expression) of nine imprinted genes. Imprinted genes are genes whose expression is determined by the parent that contributed them. The researchers found several differentially methylated regions of imprinted genes were associated with in utero exposure to high molecular weight phthalates, indicating that phthalate exposure in utero may affect methylation status of imprinted genes in newborn children.

## **Grantee Publication on Prenatal Exposure to Air Pollution and Lung Function**

[Prenatal exposure to nitrate air pollution is associated with reduced child lung function.](#) The [Harvard Clean Air Research Center](#) investigators and colleagues studied 191 mother-child pairs. Mothers' exposure to ambient nitrate in fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) were estimated using a hybrid of global chemical transport model GEOS-Chem, a land-use regression model, and monitoring data. For the children, spirometry was used to measure lung function at 7 years of age. The results indicate that boys born to mothers with higher exposure to PM<sub>2.5</sub>-nitrate between 6 to 12 weeks gestation were more likely to have reductions in two measures of lung capacity: forced expiratory volume in one second (FEV<sub>1</sub>) and forced vital capacity (FVC).

## **Green Infrastructure Design Assistance Site Visit**

NRMRL's Jason Bernagros is leading a green infrastructure design project, Greening of America's Communities Program, with Region 4 and the City of Birmingham, AL. The project is transforming three city blocks into a neighborhood park that provides respite

from the heat, recreation amenities, and fosters economic revitalization. Most of the project area has recently been vacated due to FEMA buyouts. Due to its position in the floodplain and its status as a Superfund site, this area is poised to become a model for stormwater management, green infrastructure practices, and urban heat island mitigation that could be replicated throughout the city. Jason is leading an initial site visit this week with the City and Region to assess the project area for green infrastructure designs, and to prepare for a future community design workshop in Birmingham in mid-2019.

## **TSCA Support Coordination**

ORD provides support to OCSPP for the implementation of several parts of TSCA including Section 4 (Alternative Testing Strategies), Section 5 (New Chemical Evaluations) and Section 6 (Existing Chemical Evaluations, including prioritization). Support is provided by nearly all of ORD's laboratories and centers and includes research and assessment activities included in two national research programs (CSS and HHRA). ORD's Executive lead for TSCA support activities is Jeff Frithsen. ORD scientists and managers are reminded to keep Jeff informed of all work being done to support TSCA.

## **Site Visit to Fort Campbell, KY**

This week, NRMRL's Laura Boczek and Mark Rodgers are traveling to Fort Campbell to follow up on previous water quality monitoring in barracks that had new toilets installed. During their visit earlier this year, they tested free chlorine residual and water temperature to understand how the water quality changes in the plumbing systems before and after the installation of toilets. During this trip, Mark and Laura will be measuring chlorine residuals after the new toilets were installed. Mike Royer (NRMRL), Michael Nye (NERL) and Terra Haxton (NHSRC) will also visit Fort Campbell to follow up on research projects involving leak detection and water system resilience.

## **Landfill Closure in Puerto Rico**

NRMRL's Steve Rock is providing technical support to Region 2 and Puerto Rico. Steve, along with scientists from Region 2 and Florida State University, visited operating and abandoned landfills and made recommendations regarding the use of evapotranspiration covers to provide final closure. Last week's site visit included informational meetings with site owners, managers, local officials, interested neighbors, and regulators.

## **CASAC Teleconference**

On November 29<sup>th</sup>, the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee (CASAC) held a teleconference to provide comment on the "Review Plan for the Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards, External Review Draft (draft IRP)." The draft IRP (<https://www.epa.gov/naaqs/ozone-o3-air-quality-standards>) was prepared by the Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards (OAR/OAQPS) and NCEA as part of EPA's ongoing review of the ozone national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS).

## **Future of Chemical Safety in Canada**

NERL's Elaine Cohen Hubal participated in the November meeting of Health Canada/Environment Canada's Chemicals Management Plan (CMP) Science Committee. Hubal is a member of the CMP Science Committee, which contributes expertise

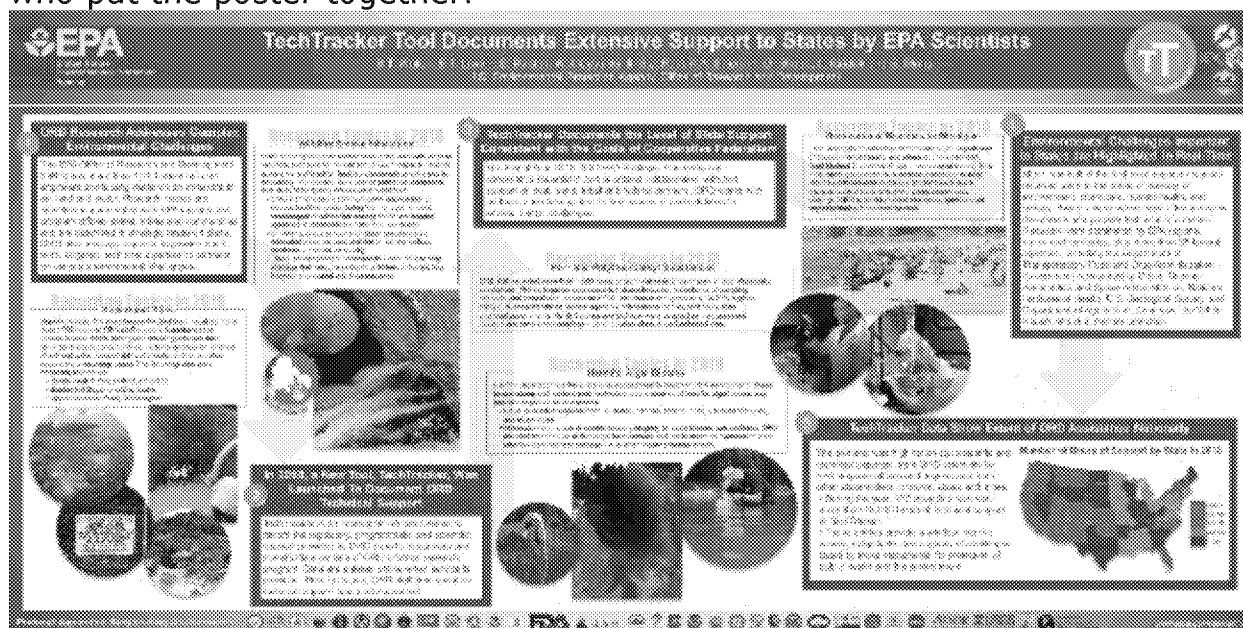
pertaining to scientific considerations in the delivery of the CMP. This meeting of the committee provided input on a *Public Health Approach to Chemicals Management in Canada*. This collaboration helps align research and responses to chemical safety between the United States and Canada.

## Naval Postgraduate School Uses ORD's Water Network Tool for Resilience

NHSRC's Dr. Terra Haxton and NRMRL's Dr. Regan Murray have led the development of the Water Network Tool for Resilience (WNTR) that simulates and analyzes the resilience of water distribution networks to a variety of hazardous scenarios, including earthquakes, floods, wildfires, and extreme storms. Recently, the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) used WNTR in a report to examine the resilience of water and power utilities. One potential application discussed in the report was the water utility on the U.S. Virgin Islands.

## TechTracker Poster Presented at SETAC

The TechTracker poster presented by Emma Lavoie (NCEA), Sheryl Stohs, (Region 10), and Christina Baghdikian, (NHEERL), at the SETAC annual meeting in Sacramento, is a credit to all of ORD. Special thanks goes to the 473 scientists who recorded more than 43,000 hours of technical support to EPA regions, states and others during FY 2018. The poster summarizes FY18 data and highlights some of the most frequently queried topics. Several copies of the poster are on display in ORD locations. Congratulations to all involved, including the ORD Program Support Coordinators led by OSP's Susan Burden who put the poster together!



## In the Office:

## Technology Transfer (FTTA) FY 2019 Priority – Outreach to partners



As part of its FY 2019 priority to reach out to potential partners, EPA's Federal Technology Transfer Act (FTTA) staff, based out of ORD, participated in a recent OLEM Industry Day event in Washington, DC. The event, co-hosted with EPA's Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization, was designed to provide valuable information to companies about OLEM, contracting needs, and programs available to small and/or disadvantaged businesses. The FTTA staff presented information about EPA-invented technologies related to hazardous waste that are available for licensing, and shared the value of collaborating with EPA to access our research expertise. There was considerable interest from the 80+ industry contacts at the event in learning more about ORD and our research labs.

## **2019 Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) Contributions**

A recent transmittal provided details about setting up TSP contributions for 2019. The TSP elective deferral contribution limit for 2019 will increase to \$19,000. The maximum catch-up contribution for employees 50 years of age and over will remain \$6,000. To distribute contributions equally over 26 pay periods, changes will need to be made between December 9 and December 22, 2018. FERS participants must make a contribution in each pay period in order to receive Agency matching contributions. Unless changed or canceled by the employee, 2018 biweekly contribution amounts or percentages automatically carryover into 2019.

## **Use of Non-contract Carriers**

OARS/TMD has received numerous questions recently regarding the use of non-contract carriers, in particular for travelers to Cincinnati. OCFO has provided information on the importance of using the contract carrier and allowable exceptions under the Federal Travel Regulation. If the use of a non-contract carrier is justified, these steps should be followed:

- Airfare will be reserved in Concur, and the preparer will select a non-contract carrier.
- The Travel Authorization will go through the normal approval process. The supervisor's approval of the TA also indicates his/her approval of the use of the non-contract carrier.
- Air travel will be booked through BCD Travel, and travel will occur.
- Travel voucher will be prepared based on the travel authorization.

Questions should be directed to Laurel Ajabi, Acting TMD Division Director via email or at 202-564-5955.

## **Payroll Reminders for 2019**

- Number of Pay Periods – There are 27 pay periods in 2018, and the final 2018 pay day will be December 31, 2018. Some employees may see their final 2018 pay deposited in their bank accounts one day earlier than normal. In the 2019 tax year, we will return to the usual 26 pay periods. This will reduce the total taxable wages reported for the year resulting in a decrease in federal and state tax withholdings. To calculate the withholdings, EPA's payroll provider, IBC, uses the Federal Income Tax Withholdings Formula.
- Transportation (Commuting) Benefits – For tax year 2019, the monthly transportation fringe benefit limit is \$265, as is the monthly limitation for qualified

parking, up from \$260 for tax year 2018. Please see the [2019 Employer's Tax Guide to Fringe Benefits, Fringe Benefit Exclusion Rules section, 'Transportation \(Commuting\) Benefits'](#) subsection, 'Exclusion from wages' for more details.

- Pay Calendars – 2019 Payroll calendars are available at: <https://www.doi.gov/ibc/resources/payroll-calendars>.

## **Do You Bowl?**

ORD's Mike Slimak and Janice Brown do! [Read Janice's interview with Mike to learn more about EPA Lean Management in ORD and see an actual bowling chart.](#)

## **USAccess Badges**

Everyone must get a new badge. Despite the expiration date that is printed on the badge, all of the old badges will cease to work for access in 2019. Please don't wait to make an appointment, you can find a location near home or work at a shared service center that might have appointments immediately. It will take about two weeks for a badge to be delivered to a local badge office. Individuals will receive notification from [HSPD12Admin@usaccess.gsa.gov](mailto:HSPD12Admin@usaccess.gsa.gov) about where to go to pick up their issued badge. To find enrollment locations, go to <https://app003.timetrade.com/tc/login.do?url=usaccess> and click on 'Applicant Access. Then, click 'To Schedule' then search on your zip code.

## **Scientific Integrity Policy Survey**

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) invited Agency employees to take a survey about EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy. This survey is part of an OIG audit examining whether the Scientific Integrity Policy is being implemented as intended. The OIG's survey is anonymous and takes about 20 minutes to complete. It was emailed to all EPA employees and more than 3,000 EPA contractors. It was sent by [kohler.james@epa.gov](mailto:kohler.james@epa.gov) via [surveymonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com) on Nov. 12 in an email titled "OIG Survey on Scientific Integrity at the EPA." It closes on December 14.

## **Deadline to Interview and Rank ASPPH Fellows Is December 7**

NCER is coordinating the new 5-year program with the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health (ASPPH) to support Environmental Health Fellowships for early career public health specialists. ASPPH has extended the deadline to December 7 for interested EPA host offices to interview and rank available ASPPH Environmental Health Fellows for placement at any EPA location. To learn more, please contact Jayne Michaud at [michaud.jayne@epa.gov](mailto:michaud.jayne@epa.gov).

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## **Accolades:**

### **Scientist Recognized for Publication Awards**

NRMRL's Raj Varma was recognized by Clarivate Analytics as a Highly Cited Researcher for his exceptional research performance, demonstrated by production of multiple highly cited papers that rank in the top 1% by citations for chemistry this year. Raj was also

awarded the Publons Peer Review Award 2018, for placing in the top 1% of reviewers, determined by the number of peer review reports performed during the year.

## High Impact Publications

Two NHEERL authored articles are [Editor Highlights](#) in the latest issue of *Toxicological Sciences*. [One article](#) features the updated NHEERL SeqAPASS computational tool, which rapidly assesses the likelihood that a chemical will act on the same protein target in another species based on similarities in protein structure and sequence. Study results provide a compelling line of evidence for using SeqAPASS to derive screening level, species-specific, susceptibility predictions for both human and ecological hazard assessments. The [second article](#) presents study results, which further developed the potential for high-throughput expression profiling technologies that can simultaneously evaluate the potential contribution of multiple signaling pathways to an adverse outcome, allowing for more focused use of secondary, more costly screening technologies. Both approaches will be of high utility in implementing new approaches for TSCA.

## Paper Receives Honorable Mention for Society of Toxicology's Paper of the Year Award

The scientific paper titled "[Evaluating In Vitro-In Vivo Extrapolation of Toxicokinetics](#)" authored by EPA researchers from NCCT, NERL and NHEERL was recognized by the Society of Toxicology's Board of Publications and received honorable mention for the Paper of the Year Award. Prioritizing the risk of thousands of chemicals requires an understanding of exposure, toxicity, and toxicokinetics (TK). Toxicokinetic data can be used to estimate blood and tissue concentrations following a given exposure to a chemical as well as provide an estimate of the dose to a person that is required to achieve a blood concentration that disrupted cell processes in an in vitro test system. This paper describes the accuracy to which rapid, high-throughput TK assays and computational modeling can predict the TK behavior in an animal and highlights the primary sources of uncertainty.

## In the News:

### EPA Releases New Tools to Test and Treat Additional PFAS in Drinking Water

EPA [announced](#) an updated and validated way to test for four additional per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in drinking water, including GenX. The update to EPA Method 537, which was first published in 2009, is part of EPA's efforts to increase the amount of research and information that is publicly available for chemicals in the PFAS family.

## In the Community:

### EPA-RTP STEM Outreach Program

- Today, the program will lead Generate: The Energy Game at Reedy Creek Middle School in Cary, N.C.
- On Thursday, the program will lead its eighth biweekly hands-on STEM activity for the afterschool program at Holt Elementary School in Durham; and participate as career role models in an afterschool program for African American males at Powell Elementary School in Raleigh.

## Faces of ORD: NERL's Asja Korajkic



**Name:** Asja Korajkic

**Job/Position:** Research Microbiologist

**L/C/O or Program:** NERL/Cincinnati/ORD

**1. When did you start at EPA?** I was a federal postdoc from 2011-2015, and I accepted a permanent position with the Agency in September of 2015.

**2. What's the most interesting thing about your job?** My job is a good blend of field, lab and desk work so it's pretty dynamic. I also interact with a multi-disciplinary team of researchers, which always keeps it interesting.

**3. What's the most interesting thing in your workspace?** That's a really tough one! Several years ago, we helped reunite an elderly cat with his owner and I've kept the flyer ever since.

**4. What's your favorite thing to do (besides come to work)?** I enjoy reading and spending time with our two Maine Coon cats, Boone and Reba. Weather permitting, I also like to swim and go for long walks/hikes.

**5. What's your favorite lunch spot?** I usually go for a walk instead, but when I do go out for lunch it's usually to Cactus Pear, a nearby Mexican restaurant.

**6. If you could have one superpower, what would it be?** I'm not sure what it would be called (or if it would be only one power), but since I love animals I would want to be able to provide safe and healthy habitats for them worldwide.

**7. What is your favorite movie?** I don't know if I would call it a favorite, but I've seen "Pulp Fiction" several times and am not tired of it yet.

**8. Describe any steps you take in your daily life to protect the environment.** I carpool to work, and work from home at least one day during the pay-period. We also recycle all the eligible materials at work and home and try to avoid products that are detrimental to the environment.